



# Improving the experience and benefits of Multi Sensory Environments for people with dementia

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[kingston.ac.uk/sensoryroom](http://kingston.ac.uk/sensoryroom)



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## **Multi Sensory Environments (MSE),**

sometimes also referred to as Snoezelen or Sensory Rooms, offer stimulation to the senses: sight, sound, touch, of comfort and wellbeing supporting positive taste, smell and movement.

They aim to enhance feelings of comfort and wellbeing, relieve stress and pain and maximise a person's potential to focus, all of which help improve communication and memory.



The use of MSE in dementia care can improve function and alleviate psychological and behavioural symptoms e.g. challenging behaviour and depression, increase appropriate communication, and improve staff morale.

(Collier et al, 2010)

## **Problem**

MSEs have been installed with little thought to their design or how they are to be used. Subsequently, the environment does not always work for the person with dementia and staff stop using them.

## **Aim**

By identifying the design features that particularly meet the needs of older people with dementia and the needs of the care home, staff will be in a stronger position to create an environment that works.

# Methodes

- Study
  - a) 32 semi-structured interviews/conversations using questionnaire in 16 care homes  
12 managers, 14 activity coordinators, 4 members of care staff
  - b) Observation of facilities, environment, sensory sessions and activities with residents
- Focus group workshop
- Qualitative evaluation of best practice / case studies
- Establishing criteria for appropriate design solutions; developing design brief

# Results

## Study and workshop

Limited range of sensory equipment and items appropriate for this age group.

Set up of space often not suitable for older people with dementia.

Not enough multi sensory stimulation - visual equipment is dominating.

Lack of the skills and knowledge amongst staff to set up and utilise sensory facilities appropriately.

**Design criteria** When constructing a MSE for people with dementia the following factors should be considered to make it successful and effective:

- Feeling comfortable and safe
- Meaningful and familiar
- Multi sensory experience
- Stimulation and relaxation
- Control and interaction
- Age appropriate and usable



# How to make a Sensory Room for people living with dementia

A Guide Book



Anke Jakob  
Lesley Collier



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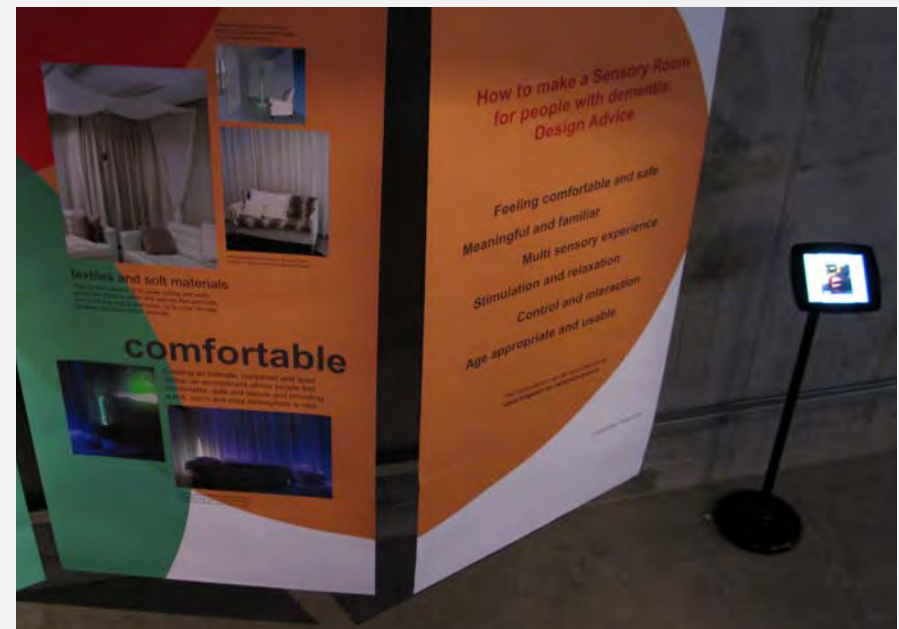
References, picture credits and acknowledgments .....

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# Exhibition 'Sensory Rooms: Designing Interventions to support dementia care'

21 - 25 October 2014  
Somerset House, London

[insideoutfestival.org.uk/2014/events/sensory-rooms-designing-interventions-to-support-dementia-care/](http://insideoutfestival.org.uk/2014/events/sensory-rooms-designing-interventions-to-support-dementia-care/)



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